

The Destructive Phase of the Television

Television has become the most common way of entertainment and amusement today. It has replaced many physical activities, like sports and reading, which were previously utilized by people to spend their leisure time. However, television is not the correct substitute for those activities, which besides entertaining also enhance skills and talents. Researches performed on the impact of television undoubtedly prove its ill effects upon the viewers! Moreover, most part of the entertainment programs displayed on television transgress Islamic bounds...

The Messenger of Allah (sallallahu alaihi wa-sallam) said: "Everything with which a man amuses himself is Baatil (baseless, null and impermissible) - except three, his practicing with bow (and arrow); his training the horse and his playing with his family." [Saheeh al-Bukharee] This Hadeeth encourages the Muslims to choose amusements that benefit him, either by improving skills or strengthening family ties. Television, on the other hand, severs family bonds. Television programs dealing with family and personal matters suggest a lifestyle far from reality; single-parent families, children out of wedlock, continuous disputes and problems are publicized as normal way of life and divorce is portrayed as the easiest way out!

Islam does not allow any amusement, which make people negligent of Allah. Television does not only make one negligent of Allah's remembrance, but it also makes people negligent of their obligatory duties, especially the Salaah (prayer).

Television transmits fictitious stories, which greatly attract the viewers, as it takes one away from the reality into the world of desires and fantasy. Islam is in strong opposition to such illusions, because illusions make man negligent of death and Hereafter. The Prophet (sallallahu alaihi wa-sallam) said: "Make mention of the destroyer of desires (i.e. death) very often." [(Hasan) at-Tirmidhee no: 2049, and Ibn Majah no: 4258]

Television also destroys the Muslim's Aqeedah, Character, Health, Wealth, and it has also become a cause of wasting time, as we shall see in the following:

Destruction of Aqeedah:

Television displays images and stories of Shirk, un-Islamic cultures and rituals that inevitably influence the viewer's belief. Many Muslims have been lead to believe in the false ideas and beliefs presented on the television - the proof for this is the increasing number of un-Islamic beliefs that are rampant in the Muslim society, like spirit possession, belief in good luck charms and amulets, belief in auspiciousness and inauspiciousness of particular days and numbers, belief in fortune telling and astrology, etc.

Sometimes, television propagates false ideas and beliefs in such subtle way that the viewer learns them unknowingly, especially in children programs, where 'super heroes', like superman, etc. are often portrayed as the saviors of the Universe and its inhabitants, who reach anywhere and everywhere to help people and protect them from any kind of dangers!! Such ideas corrupt the basic beliefs of Islam that Allah Alone is the Ruler and Savior of mankind and He alone can protect the people from all harm.

So, television can gradually destroy our Aqeedah and subsequently ruin our

Hereafter, because Aqeedah is the foundation of Islam. It is necessary that the Aqeedah be free from all un-Islamic influences, in order to escape the Hell-Fire. This requires that we avoid all chances and means that cause danger to our Aqeedah - one of which is watching television!

One should not only be concerned about his beliefs and actions, but he should also take precautions to safeguard the Aqeedah of his family members, since on the Day of Judgment, everybody will be accounted for his actions and the actions of those under his guardianship. Allah says in the Qur'aan: "Oh you who believe, save yourselves and your families from the fire which is fueled by men and stones. Over it are Angels who are stern, and strong, who do not disobey Allah's orders and they do what He orders" [Soorah at-Tahrim (66): 6] The Messenger of Allah (sallallahu alaihi wa-sallam) said: "Every one of you is a protector and a guardian of his immediate charge and is responsible for the actions of those people who are committed to his charge. A man is a guardian in respect to the family members of his house. A woman is a guardian in respect to her husband's house and his children." [Saheeh al-Bukharee and Saheeh Muslim]

Destruction of Islamic Morals:

Immoral behavior, violence, crime, music, singing, use of tobacco, alcohol and cigarette are some of the many un-Islamic behaviors taught by the Television. Especially children, television teaches them to lie, cheat and steal from early ages!

Music is an integral part of television - Allah's Messenger (sallallahu alaihi wa-sallam) said: "Verily, I forbid two voices, which are imbecilic and sinfully shameless; one, a voice (of singing) accompanied by musical instruments and Shaytaan's wind instrument..." [al-Hakim] Scholars mention many wisdoms behind the prohibition of music, like music sprouts hypocrisy, prevents the heart from Allah's remembrance, excites sinful desires, etc. but the fact that Allah's Messenger (sallallahu alaihi wa-sallam) called it the voice of Shaytaan should be enough for the believer to understand the great harm and danger associated with music!

Advertisements on television fully exploit female voice and use semi-nude female pictures to promote and sell their products. Whereas, Islam has even prohibited the women to speak in soft voice with the strangers, Allah says: "...be not soft in speech, lest he in whose heart is a disease (of hypocrisy, or evil desire for adultery, etc.) should be moved with desire, but speak in a honorable manner." [Soorah al-Ahzab (33): 32]

Immodesty, nudity and free mixing of men and women are the most apparent evil spread by the television. Islam teaches that modesty is a part of Eemaan and prohibits the mixing of sexes. But television puts great emphasis on immorality and fornication (zina) regarding which Allah says in the Qur'aan, "...come not near to zina. Verily, it is Fahishah (immoral sin) and an evil way." [Soorah al-Isra (17): 32]

Islam does not only consider the actual act of fornication to be zina, but Allah's Messenger (sallallahu alaihi wa-sallam) said: "The zina of the eyes is the gaze (at which is unlawful, e.g. Nudity); the zina of the ears is to listen (to the unlawful, e.g. talks of nudity which excite illicit desires, music, etc.); the zina of the tongue is to speak (what is evil); the zina of the hand is to touch (the female who is unlawful to you); the zina of the feet is to walk (towards unlawful); the zina of the heart is to desire (what is unlawful) and it is the private parts which either commit or shuns

the actual act of fornication." [Saheeh Muslim]

So, watching nudity and evils displayed on television is zina of the eyes, listening to them is zina of the ears, and the illicit desires aroused by them means zina of the heart. Allah says: "Verily! Hearing, Sight, and the heart, all will be questioned (by Allah)." [Soorah al-Isra (17): 36]

Imaam Ibn Katheer (rahimahullah) writes, 'the person will be asked about them (all parts of the body) on the Day of Resurrection, and they (all parts of his body) will be asked about him and what did he do with them?'

Repeatedly watching the evil displayed on television so adversely influence the viewer's mind that he considers them to be the acceptable mode of behavior, he gradually looses his Haya (modesty, shame and shyness) and imitates the evil. Allah's Messenger (sallallahu alaihi wa-sallam) said: "...If you do not have Haya, then do whatever you want." [Saheeh al-Bukharee]

Imaam an-Nawawi (rahimahullah) said in the commentary of this Hadeeth, "When he looses his Haya, he will freely indulge in what Allah has prohibited. This is similar to the Hadeeth, "...Let him take his seat in Hell-Fire." [Saheeh al-Bukharee and Saheeh Muslim] meaning he will take his seat in the Fire... what prevents a person from indulging in sin is al-Haya that he has. When he abandons al-Haya, he will be like the one whose character and habits order him to indulge in every type of evil." Researches testify to the fact that many people actually enact the crime and violence displayed on television!

Destruction of Wealth:

Wealth is a trial from Allah, and the believers are expected to earn it from lawful means and also spend it in the lawful needs, otherwise, wealth can become a source of misery in the Hereafter.

Allah says in the Qur'aan: "And among mankind are those who purchase Lahwal-Hadis (idle talk) so as to lead astray (others) from the Path of Allah. And they make a mockery of the laws of Allah. To them, there is a disgraceful punishment... Give them the news of a painful punishment." [Soorah Luqman (31): 6-7] Ibn Mas'oud (radhi allahu anhu) commented about the verse saying this (Lahwal-Hadis) refers to singing. Ibn Jarir (rahimahullah) said about this verse that it (Lahwal-Hadis) means all speech that hinder people from seeing the signs of Allah and following His Path. Other scholars explain that this verse was revealed to prohibit music and stories imported from Persia, since they divert man's attention from the remembrance of Allah and take him into the realm of imagination. -- Television consist all these evil -- Therefore, purchasing television is purchasing Lahwal-Hadis, which is spending wealth in the unlawful and thus destruction of wealth.

Allah's Messenger (sallallahu alaihi wa-sallam) said: "The servant of Allah will remain standing on the Day of Judgment until he is questioned about... his wealth, from where he acquired it and in what way he spent it..." [At-Tirmidhee]

Destruction of Time and Health:

People spend hours watching television, which is damaging to the physical and mental health. It also increases obesity, which is the root cause of many treacherous diseases like heart disease and diabetes. Television causes laziness and

inefficiency in people. Students spend more time watching television and neglect studies and learning.

We should realize that time and health are two great blessings of Allah for which Allah will account us on the Day of Resurrection. The Messenger of Allah (sallallahu alaihi wa-sallam) said: **"The servant of Allah will remain standing on the Day of Judgment until he is questioned about his life, how he spent it..."** [at-Tirmidhee] It is therefore necessary that we make good use of our time and health and perform those acts, which will benefit us in the Hereafter. Allah's Messenger (sallallahu alaihi wa-sallam) has warned us against spending time and health foolishly, he (sallallahu alaihi wa-sallam) said: **"There are two blessings that many people lose, health and free time."** [Saheeh al-Bukharee] and: **"Lose no time to do good work before you are caught up by one of the seven calamities...A starvation which may ruin your wisdom, or a prosperity which may mislead you, or an ailment which may damage your health, or an old age which may harm your senses, or a sudden death or the appearance of Dajjal. All these are bad events which may be awaited; or the Doomsday, but this Day is indeed very hard and bitter."** [At-Tirmidhee (2408)]

The Only Solution: Turn Off the Television

The only solution to escape the enormous dangers of television is to completely abandon it. Islam not only forbid violating the laws of Allah, but also condemns all means that may lead to it. For example, Allah says about zina (fornication or adultery): **"And come not near to zina. Verily, it is Fahishah (immoral sin) and an evil way."** [Soorah al-Isra (17): 32] Scholars say in the explanation of this verse, do not even tread the paths or acquire the means, which may lead to the evil act of committing zina or any other sin. Thus, television, which is the stepping-stone towards zina and a number of other evils, should be thrown out of the Muslim houses, or at least the amount of time spent in viewing the television should be limited.

Shaikh Ibn Baaz (rahimahullah) said in al-Fatawa (3/227): "With regard to television, it is a dangerous device and its harmful effects are very great, like those of the cinema, or even worse. We know from the research that has been written about it and from the words of experts in Arab countries and elsewhere enough to indicate that it is dangerous and very harmful to Islamic beliefs (Aqeedah), morals and the state of society. This is because it includes the presentation of bad morals, tempting scenes, immoral pictures, semi-nakedness, destructive speech, and Kufr. It encourages imitation of their conduct and ways of dressing, respect for their leaders, neglect of Islamic conduct and ways of dressing, and looking down on the scholars and heroes of Islam. It damages their image by portraying them in an off-putting manner that makes people despise them and ignore them. It shows people how to cheat, steal, and hatch plots, and commit acts of violence against others. Without doubt, anything that produces so many bad results should be stopped and shunned, and we have to close all the doors that could lead to it..."

Alternatives for Television

When the television is turned off, you will find plenty of time for other activities. Develop the habit to properly manage your time, and engage in beneficial activities. Always remember the Hadeeth of Allah's Messenger (sallallahu alaihi wa-sallam), "Lose no time to do good work before you are caught up by one of the seven calamities...A starvation which may ruin your wisdom, or a prosperity which may mislead you, or an ailment which may damage your health, or an old age which

may harm your senses, or a sudden death or the appearance of Dajjal. All these are bad events which may be awaited; or the Doomsday, but this Day is indeed very hard and bitter." [At-Tirmidhee (2408)]

On the following page is a list of creative activities, which will Insha'Allah, help you and your family make beneficial use of the time that you save by not watching the television:

Alternatives for Television

(a) Outdoor Activities: Encourage outdoor activities like, swimming, horse riding, archery, etc. Allah's Messenger (sallallahu alaihi wa-sallam) always encouraged outdoor activities, it is reported in Saheeh al-Bukharee (4/120) that Allah's Messenger (sallallahu alaihi wa-sallam) arranged for horse race, also once he (sallallahu alaihi wa-sallam) passed by some people from the tribe of Aslam practicing archery and said, "O children of Ishmael! Throw (arrows), for your father was an archer. I am on the side of Bani so-and-so," meaning one of the two teams. The other team stopped throwing arrows, whereupon the Prophet said, "What has happened to them?" They replied, "How shall we throw while you are with Bani so-and-so?" He said, "Throw for I am with all of you." [Bukharee]

(b) Family time: Islam encourages maintaining close family ties. The Messenger of Allah (sallallahu alaihi wa-sallam) said: "Whoever severs the bond of kinship will not enter Paradise." [Saheeh al-Bukharee] Spend ample of time with your family, communicate and know each other's needs, and help them out. This is the best way to develop meaningful relationship with your spouse and children. Aa'ishah (radhi allahu anha) narrates that it was the practice of Allah's Messenger (sallallahu alaihi wa-sallam) that after finishing the Asr prayer, he (sallallahu alaihi wa-sallam) would visit his wives and stay with one of them at that time. [Saheeh al-Bukharee] This is also the best time to teach your children discipline, respect and Islamic etiquettes. You can also read to them stories of the Prophets, give them short Du'aa (supplication) to memorize, recite Qur'aan, etc.

(c) Community Living: Brotherhood and mutual consent among the Muslims is the basis of a strong and powerful Islamic society. Allah's Messenger (sallallahu alaihi wa-sallam) first established brotherhood and love among the believer even before he initiated the Muslim society in al-Medina, Abdullah Ibn Salaam (radhi allahu anhu) said: "When the Prophet (sallallahu alaihi wa-sallam) arrived in Medina...The first thing he (sallallahu alaihi wa-sallam) said was, 'Extend peace greetings among yourselves, provide food to the needy, maintain upright relations, observe prayer at night while people are asleep, then you will peacefully enter the Gardens (Paradise).'" [Tirmidhee, Mishkat (1/168)] So, part of our community living is to strengthen the bond of brotherhood with other Muslims. Allah's Messenger (sallallahu alaihi wa-sallam) said: "Believers in mutual love, are like the human body where, when the eye is in agony, the entire body feels pain, when the head aches, all the body will suffer." [Saheeh Muslim]

There are a number of ways to build mutual relationship, like, knowing the needs of other Muslims and helping them out. Allah's Messenger (sallallahu alaihi wa-sallam) said: "A Muslim is the brother of a Muslim; he neither oppresses him nor does he fail him. Whosoever removes a worldly grief from a believer, Allah will remove from him one grief of the Day of Judgment. Whosoever shields a Muslim, Allah will shield him on the Day of Resurrection." [Saheeh al-Bukharee] and, "Allah helps His slaves

as long as he helps his brother." [Saheeh Muslim] Also, visit the sick people, share their pain, encourage patience, give them hope in Allah's Mercy, etc. all these acts create closer relationship and are from Sunnah of Allah's Messenger (sallallahu alaihi wa-sallam), he (sallallahu alaihi wa-sallam) said: "Feed the hungry, visit the sick and free the captives." [Saheeh al-Bukharee]

(d) Other Activities:

- 1) Enroll in Classes of interests, like, gardening, sewing, cooking, computers, swimming, etc.
- 2) Read Islamic books in particular and also other informative books.
- 3) Listen to tapes, lectures by Islamic scholars.
- 4) Perform acts of worship, like Dhikr, voluntary prayers, reading Qur'aan, etc.